

Mayor's Update



505 Express Bus and Commuter Rail Stations

We heard some encouraging news for Newton commuters yesterday.

At a meeting I helped organize between Newton elected officials and MBTA leadership yesterday morning, acting MassDOT Secretary Jamey Tesler and MBTA General Manager Steve Poftak committed to restoring service on the 505 Express Bus to Boston this fall every 20 minutes. (They do not yet have an exact date for when service will resume.)

They had more good news regarding Newton's three commuter rail stations in Auburndale, West Newton and Newtonville. A 30% design for all three commuter rail stations will be ready for a public meeting this fall, likely in September. Tesler and Poftak also committed to further funding for the 100% design. The design includes making all three stations fully accessible and building dual, 800-foot platforms to allow for more frequent, all day, bi-directional service and an eventual transition to electric trains. We still have a long way to go (nailing down the funding for the construction and living through the years of work) but it's exciting to have this "green light." Thank you MassDOT and MBTA.

Thanks also go to my colleagues U.S. Congressperson Jake Auchincloss, State Senator Cindy Creem, State Rep. Kay Khan, City Council President Susan Albright and Ward 2 Councilor Emily Norton. We banded together to advocate for these improvements. Rep. Khan, in particular, has been a persistent advocate for these upgrades for years and years.

This morning we cut the ribbon to officially open the Pony Truss Trail, a Newton gem long the banks of the Charles River. So many people and organizations partnered with the City and the State Department of Conservation and Recreation to help restore the historic trails along the Riverside Greenway.

Want to check it out? Park in the lot on Recreation Road off of 128 (just after the Grove Street exit going



northbound) and walk over the recently restored Pony Truss Bridge. [Here](#) is a link for driving directions. (Photo: I'm with DCR Commissioner Jim Montgomery, Herb Nolan of the Solomon Foundation, State Rep. Kay Khan and Ted Chapman (Newton resident and amazing advocate) of the Riverside Greenway Working Group)

COVID-19 Update

We had only two confirmed cases of COVID-19 this week, bringing our cumulative total in Newton over the course of the pandemic to 4,378.

All the Newton data continues to show very little COVID-19 among our residents.

Newton had 8 new cases during the two-week tracking period used by the State from May 30 – June 12, compared to 9 over the previous two weeks, and 14 during the two-week tracking prior to that. The average daily incidence rate is 0.6 per 100,000, down slightly from 0.7 last week, and the percent of tests performed on Newton residents that came back positive is now 0.13% of the 6,727 tests performed.

I can also report again, for the tenth week in a row, the great news that no one in Newton died with COVID-19.

Over the past seven days, from June 10– 16, the Newton Public Schools reported no new case of COVID-19. The chart with week by week school data from the pooled testing program is available [here](#) and overall school data dashboard is [here](#).

This week's State vaccination information shows that 72,495 Newtonians, or 79% of our population, have had at least one vaccine dose. The state data also shows that 71% of Newton's population is now fully vaccinated with 8% partially vaccinated. (Last week we were at 69% and 9% respectively.) State data shows 95%+ of Newton residents who are ages 30 and older are partially or fully vaccinated. To see more detailed vaccination information, click [here](#).

The vaccination rates for younger age groups are:

69% who are 20 – 29 years old (68% last week)
60% who are 16 – 19 years old (59% last week)

COVID-19 in Newton	
Total Cases	4,378
Total Deaths	214
*As of 6/16/21	

84% who are 12 – 15 years old (79% last week)

Not vaccinated yet? Appointments are available and increasingly many clinics take walk-ins. Find locations at newtonma.gov/vaccines.

Anybody who is vaccinated can take a shot (sorry, I had to) at winning \$1 million, or for youngsters 12 – 17, college scholarships. Get more details [here](#) and sign up for one of five jackpots starting on July 1.



July 4th

Are you in Newton for the July 4th holiday? Celebrate and have some fun on both Saturday and Sunday thanks to Newton Parks, Recreation and Culture and Newton Community Pride. Click [here](#) to find more information.

Being Water Smart

Summer is here and we're heading to the water.

Here are some ideas from Newton's Health and Human Services staff to keep in mind before you head out to the pool, a lake or the beach:

- Always swim with a buddy; do not swim alone.
 - Never leave a young child unattended near water.
 - Have young children or inexperienced swimmers wear life jackets around water, but, please, do not rely on life jackets alone.
 - Maintain constant, undistracted supervision of children; keep them within arm's reach. (Many children who drown in home pools were out of sight for less than five minutes and in the care of one or both parents at the time.)
 - Swim in designated areas supervised by lifeguards.
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Last week I heard so many wonderful speeches at the Newton North and Newton South High School graduations. Listen to one of them from Imani Fonfield, Newton South Class of '21.



Free Summer Grab & Go Meals

Newton's Grab & Go meal program for students and adults will continue with free meals through the summer.

The program, begun in the early days of the pandemic last March, has provided 458,180 meals through the end of May.

Newton residents can pick up 3 days' worth of bagged breakfasts and lunches from two locations on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. to noon. The pickup locations are Newton North High School, 457 Walnut Street at the Theater Entrance, and Newton South High School, 140 Brandeis Road at the Wheeler Entrance.

Warmly,

Ruthanne

P.S. Help make Newton prettier and healthier. **Plant a tree!** The Newton Tree Conservancy is accepting neighborhood applications for Fall 2021 tree plantings. They hope to plant 150 new trees. Find details about the program and sign up for community tree plantings [here](#). The deadline is Sunday, June 27.

Wally's Making Books

Come Alive!
Tuesday, June 22 at 7 PM



Come Along with Wally, official mascot of the Boston Red Sox, on a reading adventure!

P.P.S. [Sign up](#) for *Tails and Tales*, the summer 2021 Newton Free Library program where kids can enjoy books, have adventures, and win prizes. They're kicking the summer off with this special virtual event with Wally from the Red Sox: [Wally's Making Books Come Alive](#) on Tuesday, June 22 at 7:00 p.m. Come along with Wally, official mascot of the Boston Red Sox, on a **reading adventure**. This fun, fast-paced show invites kids to explore the joys of reading while

laughing and increasing their confidence in learning. To Connect on

Zoom: <https://redsox.zoom.us/j/93977807892>

P.P.P.S. **Cradles to Crayons**, whose giving factory is based on Newtonville Avenue, welcomes volunteers as young as age 5 to help process donated goods. Cradles to Crayons collects new and high-quality used children's goods on behalf of children in need. Need a great summer activity for your family, group or business? Click [here](#) to

register.

P.P.P.P.S. Many thanks to Newton resident Rebecca V. for the timely reminder to all of us to **trim back that Spring overgrowth** of bushes, shrubs, plants and trees near our sidewalks to allow for all of us to walk by safely.

P.P.P.P.S. Have you spotted the colorful knitted designs around Newton? **International Yarn Bombing day** was last weekend, and “Hooked on Newton,” a volunteer fiber art group, coordinated by Newton Parks, Recreation and Culture staff, is celebrating with public art installations in four locations. Check out the hand-woven, knit and crocheted textural and unique pieces at the Commonwealth Avenue fencing in Auburndale, Crystal Lake, in front of the West Newton Cinema and at the Newton Free Library.

